

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, GE, US
SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP TOUR D'HORIZON: AMBASSADOR'S LUNCHEON
- FOR AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE GRUNERT

REF: A. BERLIN 5136, B. STATE 199269, C. STATE 190578.

1. DURING MY AUGUST 9 LUNCHEON FOR GDR AMBASSADOR-
DESIGNATE TO THE US HORST GRUNERT, TOASTS WERE EXCHANGED
IN WHICH WE BOTH ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED TO TAKE THOSE STEPS
POSSIBLE WHICH COULD SERVE AS AN IMPETUS TO IMPROVE THE
CLIMATE AND SUBSTANCE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUN-
TRIES. AFTER LUNCH, I TOOK GRUNERT AND RETURNING AMBASSA-
DOR SIEBERT ASIDE FOR A DISCUSSION OF SOME OF THE SPECIFIC
ITEMS OF INTEREST TO US. THE DCM SAT IN.

2. CONSULAR CONVENTION: I OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY RE-
FERRING TO OUR EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO RETURN TO THE
DRAWING BOARDS ON THIS ISSUE AND ASKED GRUNERT WHETHER THE
GDR HAD HAD ANY NEW THOUGHTS ON HOW WE COULD RESOLVE THE
OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS IN THIS ISSUE TO OUR MUTUAL SATIS-
FACTION. GRUNERT, WHO MAY NOT HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO
DISCUSS SPECIFIC ITEMS OF BUSINESS, BEGAN HIS RESPONSE BY
SAYING THAT THEY HAD NO "SOLUTIONS" TO THE PROBLEM. HE
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ASSERTED THE GDR HAD BEEN SURPRISED BY THE U.S.'S "ABRUPT
REJECTION" OF THEIR JUNE 6 PROPOSALS IN WASHINGTON. THESE
PROPOSALS HAD SEEMED REASONABLE TO THEM, SINCE THEY HAD
TAKEN WORD-FOR-WORD LANGUAGE FROM CONSULAR CONVENTIONS WE
HAVE WITH TWO OTHER COUNTRIES. HE SAID THE GDR SIMPLY
COULD NOT HAVE A CONSULAR AGREEMENT OR AN EXCHANGE OF
LETTERS ON AN AGREEMENT THAT DID NOT TOUCH ON THE QUESTION

9F THEIR CITIZENSHIP. HE THEN SAID THAT SOME OF THE INFORMAL REMARKS THE U.S. SIDE HAD MADE EARLIER ABOUT BERLIN WHEN EXPLAINING ITS POSITION ON GERMAN NATIONALITY HAVE LED THEM TO LOOK AT THIS PARTICULAR ASPECT (I.E., BERLIN) OF THE PROBLEM. AT THE SAME TIME, GRUNERT GAVE NO INDICATION WHAT, WHEN OR IF THEY WOULD PROVIDE SOME NEW LANGUAGE TO US.

3. I NOTED IN RESPONSE THAT THE U.S. CONSULAR CONVENTIONS TO WHICH HE HAD ALLUDED WERE SPECIFIC EXCEPTIONS, AS HAD BEEN EXPLAINED TO AMBASSADOR SIEBER IN WASHINGTON. I TOLD GRUNERT THAT, IF THE GDR CONTINUED TO INSIST IN AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS ON A DEFINITION OF GDR NATIONALITY, WE WERE COMPELLED TO RESPOND EXPLAINING OUR POSITION ON GERMAN NATIONALITY. I THEN REITERATED OUR READINESS TO GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD ON THIS ISSUE AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THEY WOULD ALSO DO SO IN AN EFFORT TO FIND A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE SOLUTION.

4. PROPERTY CLAIMS. I NOTED WE HAD BEEN PLEASED WITH THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE INFORMAL TALKS ON PROPERTY CLAIMS THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE AT THE END OF MARCH; AT THAT TIME OUR EXPERTS HAD SUGGESTED CERTAIN IDEAS AND PROPOSALS ON WHICH THEY HAD REQUESTED A GDR RESPONSE. I WONDERED WHEN THE GDR WOULD RESPOND TO OUR PRESENTATION.

5. GRUNERT SAID IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT NEGOTIATIONS
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ON THE PROPERTY CLAIMS SETTLEMENT COULD NOT TAKE PLACE BEFORE 1981 AND THAT WHAT WE HAD BEEN SUGGESTING WERE TALKS IN PREPARATION FOR THOSE NEGOTIATIONS. GRUNERT SAID IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT APPROPRIATE GDR EXPERTS WERE PREPARING DOCUMENTS THAT COULD BE USEFUL IN CONNECTION WITH A NEXT MEETING, BUT THAT IT WOULD STILL TAKE SOME WEEKS BEFORE THESE DOCUMENTS WERE COMPLETED. I NOTED OUR INTEREST IN LEARNING FROM THEM A PROPOSED DATE FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS TO FURTHER DISCUSS LAWS AND PROCEDURES WHICH WOULD FACILITATE THE FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS.

6. JEWISH CLAIMS. I SAID A SOLUTION TO THE QUESTION OF JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF OUR RELATIONS; WE WERE THEREFORE ENCOURAGED BY THE EXCHANGES THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE IN WASHINGTON IN WHICH AMBASSADOR SIEBER HAD BEEN INVOLVED. WE WERE PREPARED TO LEND OUR GOOD OFFICES TO ANY REASONABLE SOLUTION BOTH PARTIES MIGHT SUGGEST. I THOUGHT CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM WOULD BE PREPARED TO SEE GRUNERT ON THIS ISSUE AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN WASHINGTON.

7. GRUNERT'S RESPONSE ON THE MATTER OF JEWISH MATERIAL

CLAIMS WAS SOMEWHAT EMOTIONAL. HE SAID HE KNEW THE "IMPORTANCE AND THE INFLUENCE OF THOSE CIRCLES" WITH CONGRESS AND WASHINGTON THAT WERE BEHIND THE JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS MATTER. HE WENT ON TO SAY THE GDR WANTED TO FIND WAYS TO DIMINISH THIS "HOSTILE ATTITUDE". THE GDR WAS AN ANTI-FASCIST STATE AND HAD STRUGGLED AGAINST FASCISM. HE CONSIDERED IT ABNORMAL AND UNHEALTHY FOR THE EXISTENCE OF A "HOSTILE ATTITUDE" IN THE U.S. AGAINST THE GDR. THERE WERE NO MORAL OR LEGAL DEMANDS ON THE GDR IN THIS QUESTION AND IT WAS HIS VIEW THAT A SOLUTION COULD NOT BE LINKED TO MATERIAL DELIVERIES. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO HOPE, HE WENT ON,

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THAT THE GDR COULD REPEAT WHAT THE FRG HAD DONE ALONG THESE LINES. THE GDR HAD PAID ITS OBLIGATION TO POLAND AND THE USSR. HE REGRETTED THAT US-GDR RELATIONS WERE BURDENED BY SUCH A SITUATION.

8. I ASKED GRUNERT IF HIS REMARKS MEANT THAT THE GDR WAS NOT PREPARED TO CONSIDER FURTHER THE SUGGESTIONS THAT HAD BEEN MADE IN WASHINGTON WITH RESPECT TO MFN-TREATED GOODS. I NOTED IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT U.S. JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS, IN MAKING THEIR SUGGESTIONS, WERE NOT STRESSING THE GDR'S MORAL RESPONSIBILITY, WHICH SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE GDR TO GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE IDEA. AMBASSADOR SIEBER INTERJECTED AT THIS POINT TO SAY THAT WHAT THEY HAD HEARD HAD ONLY BEEN AN INDIRECT PROPOSAL FROM FERENCZ AND THAT THIS HAD NOT BEEN CONFIRMED OFFICIALLY, AND GRUNERT DID NOT REPLY TO MY QUESTION.

9. FEININGER PAINTINGS. I RECALLED SEVERAL PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH GRUNERT ON THIS SUBJECT. I NOTED THAT,

DURING CULTURE MINISTER HOFFMANN'S MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST, THE MINISTER HAD EXPRESSED A READINESS TO TURN OVER THE FEININGER PAINTINGS TO THE U.S. OWNERS AND THAT APPARENTLY THERE HAD BEEN NO TIME FOR THE SECRETARY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT. I SAID
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A PROMPT RETURN OF THE PAINTINGS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE ATMOSPHERE IN OUR RELATIONS. I SUGGESTED THE OPENING OF THE DRESDEN ART EXHIBIT IN NEW YORK WOULD BE AN IDEAL TIME FOR SUCH A GESTURE, SINCE IT WOULD RECEIVE MAXIMUM PUBLICITY AND BE AN AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING FOR GRUNERT'S MISSION IN THE U.S. I SAID THAT MR. COLIN, THE LAWYER FOR THE FEININGER HEIRS, HAD EXPRESSED HIS READINESS TO EXHIBIT THE PAINTINGS, GIVING THE GDR FULL CREDIT IN SO DOING. I HOPED A WAY COULD BE FOUND TO IMPLEMENT THE RETURN OF THE PAINTINGS SOONEST.

10. GRUNERT SAID HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH HIS COLLEAGUES ABOUT THE MATTER. A DIFFICULT LEGAL PROBLEM WAS INVOLVED. THE GDR RECOGNIZED THAT THE FEININGER PAINTINGS BELONG TO HIS HEIRS AND THAT THE PAINTINGS ARE THE PROPERTY OF U.S. CITIZENS. BUT AT THE SAME TIME THE GDR HAS A NUMBER OF THINGS THAT ARE IN THE U.S. OR HAD BEEN RETURNED TO THE FRG. THE GDR HAD OFFERED TO NEGOTIATE THE EXCHANGE OF SUCH OBJECTS. WHILE HE PERSONALLY DOUBTED THIS WAS THE BEST ROUTE TO FOLLOW, HE SUGGESTED THAT WAS HOW MATTERS WERE VIEWED AT THIS TIME BY HIS LEGAL COLLEAGUES RESPONSIBLE FOR PROPERTY MATTERS. HE CONCLUDED THIS PORTION OF HIS REMARKS BY SAYING THAT ONE SHOULD NOT EXPECT HIM TO COME TO WASHINGTON WITH A PRESENT IN HIS HANDS.

11. I SAID IT WOULD BE REGRETTABLE IF THE GDR TRIED TO LINK THE FEININGER PAINTINGS WITH CULTURAL OBJECTS IN THE U.S. ON WHICH IT HAS CLAIMS. IF U.S. COURTS RULE THAT THE DUERER PAINTINGS, FOR EXAMPLE, BELONGED TO THE GDR, I WAS CERTAIN THESE PAINTINGS WOULD BE RETURNED PROMPTLY. THERE WOULD BE NO LINKAGE AS FAR AS WE WERE CONCERNED. I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THE GDR WOULD FIND A
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POSITIVE SOLUTION TO THE QUESTION.

12. HUMANITARIAN CASES. I NOTED THAT THE SECRETARY HAD EXPRESSED HIS INTEREST TO FOREIGN MINISTER FISCHER IN THE

RESOLUTION OF OUTSTANDING DIVIDED FAMILY CASES. BOTH THE SECRETARY AND SENATOR JAVITS HAD EXPRESSED A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE WILHELMI CASE. I WONDERED IF THE GDR HAD HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE THE WILHELMI CASE.

13. GRUNERT NOTED THAT SHORTLY BEFORE THE SECRETARY HAD SEEN FOREIGN MINISTER FISCHER, I HAD PRESENTED A LIST OF 11 CASES (THE LIST ACTUALLY CONTAINED 10 NAMES). THEY HAD REVIEWED THE LIST AND NOTED THAT A MAJORITY OF THEM WAS EITHER SETTLED OR IN THE PROCESS OF BEING SETTLED. ONLY TWO CASES WERE LEFT, ONE OF WHICH WAS THAT OF WILHELMI. THEY HAD DETERMINED THAT HE HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE, THEREFORE, FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO INTERFERE IN THIS CASE, ANY MORE THAN THE GDR WOULD EXPECT THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO INTERFERE IN THE CASE OF A U.S. CITIZEN IN PRISON WHOSE RELEASE MIGHT BE REQUESTED BY THE GDR. AT THIS POINT SIEBER NOTED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD TOLD SECRETARY VANCE THAT HE WAS THE GDR FOREIGN MINISTER AND WAS THEREFORE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH DOMESTIC MATTERS AS THE IMPRISONMENT OF WILHELMI. GRUNERT MERELY NOTED HE REGRETTED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY COULD DO NOTHING ABOUT THE CASE. (SEE ALSO BERLIN 5160)

14. I DREW GRUNERT'S ATTENTION ONCE AGAIN TO THE IMPORTANCE OF U.S. PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS. I SAID A POSITIVE SOLUTION TO SUCH ISSUES AS JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS AND THE WILHELMI CASE WOULD NOT COST THE GDR GREATLY, BUT COULD AT THE SAME TIME CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO IMPROV-

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ING THE ATMOSPHERE, AND HOPED THEY WOULD TAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE

ATTITUDE TOWARD THESE QUESTIONS.

15. THE QUESTION OF CONFIDENCE. I THEN ASKED GRUNERT IF THERE WERE ANY PARTICULAR MATTERS HE WISHED TO RAISE. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS ONE GENERAL PROBLEM: THE MATTER OF CONFIDENCE BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. HE SAID THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS CONSTANTLY BEING ASKED BY HIGHER GDR AUTHORITIES WHAT GUARANTEES THE GDR WOULD HAVE, ONCE IT SETTLED A PROBLEM IN THE MANNER THE U.S. WISHED, THAT THE WAY TO NORMALIZATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD BE OPEN AND CLEAR. THEREFORE, HIS QUESTION WAS ONE OF HOW TO CREATE CONFIDENCE WHICH, HE ADDED, IN HIS VIEW WOULD TAKE PLACE ONLY AFTER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME.

16. IN RESPONSE, I DREW GRUNERT'S ATTENTION TO THE REMARKS PRESIDENT CARTER HAD MADE IN BERLIN TO THE EFFECT THAT AFTER THE CONSULAR CONVENTION IS RESOLVED, OUR RELATIONS COULD BE EXPANDED. IT WAS HARD FOR ME TO KNOW WHAT FURTHER ASSURANCES HE WANTED. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, I SAID I KNEW THE U.S. SIDE WAS PREPARED TO IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE AND SUBSTANCE OF OUR RELATIONS AND TO CREATE A CLIMATE OF CONFIDENCE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE NEEDED THE RIGHT KIND OF PUBLIC CLIMATE IN THE U.S.; THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GDR COULD HELP IN THIS REGARD BY RESOLVING SUCH MATTERS AS THE WILHELMI CASE. WHEN SUCH MATTERS ARE RESOLVED, THEN IT IS EASIER TO MOVE FORWARD. GRUNERT ASSERTED THE GDR ALSO HAD ITS PUBLIC OPINION TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT.

17. GRUNERT INFORMED ME THAT HE HAS DECIDED TO ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON ON AUGUST 28 AND IS ANXIOUS TO CALL ON THE SECRETARY SHORTLY AFTER LABOR DAY TO DELIVER COPIES OF HIS REMARKS AND LETTERS OF RECALL AND CREDENCE. GRUNERT RECALLED THAT THE GDR HAD ARRANGED FOR THE PRESENTATION OF MY CREDENTIALS WITHIN THREE DAYS OF ARRIVAL, AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE DEPARTMENT WOULD FACILITATE THE EARLY REPRESENTATION OF HIS CREDENTIALS.

18. COMMENT: ON THE FACE OF IT, THERE IS LITTLE POSITIVE IN WHAT GRUNERT HAD TO SAY ON MANY OF THE ISSUES OF INTEREST TO US. IT MAY BE, SENSING THAT US-USSR RELATIONS ARE TURNING DOWN AND THAT DETENTE MAY BE DETERIORATING, THE GDR DOES NOT WISH TO APPEAR TO BE TOO ACCOMMODATING TO US AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME. DURING COCKTAIL CONVERSATION WITH ME, BOTH AMBASSADOR SIEBER AND GRUNERT SEEMED CONCERNED ABOUT THE STATE OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS, WITH GRUNERT ASSERTING, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IT WAS EASIER THREE YEARS AGO TO MOVE FORWARD ON US-GDR RELATIONS BECAUSE OF THE AURA

OF DETENTE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE STANDS TAKEN BY GRUNERT ARE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT THEY HAVE TOLD US EARLIER ON MANY ISSUES (NOT INCLUDING JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS). WHILE GRUNERT DID NOT SAY THEY HAD GONE BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARDS ON THE CONSULAR CONVENTION, HIS REFERENCE TO BERLIN AND OUR CONCERNS ON THIS SCORE MAY SUGGEST THEY ARE INDEED LOOKING FOR SOME NEW LANGUAGE, ALTHOUGH THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO BE OPTIMISTIC
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AT THIS POINT. GRUNERT WAS SOMEWHAT MORE POSITIVE ON THE MATTER OF PROPERTY CLAIMS TALKS, AND WE WILL SEEK TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME. WE FOUND HIS REMARKS ON THE JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS SOMEWHAT EMOTIONAL, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THEY MAY HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD WHAT HAD BEEN PROPOSED TO THEM IN WASHINGTON. WITH RESPECT TO DIVIDED FAMILIES, WHILE WE FOUND GRUNERT'S REMARKS ABOUT THE WILHELMI CASE DISCOURAGING, HIS COMMENT THAT ALL BUT TWO OF THE CASES ARE BEING PROCESSED MAY PERHAPS BE AN ENCOURAGING SIGN. IT TENDS TO CONFORM TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SOME OF THE CASES.

19. IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONSULAR CONVENTION WE ASSUME THE DEPARTMENT WILL PROCEED WITH THE CIRCLE OF PERSONS APPROACH IN THE BONN GROUP, SINCE (A) THE GDR HAS NOTHING NEW TO OFFER AT THIS TIME AND (B) THE REITERATION OF OUR WILLINGNESS TO RETURN TO THE DRAWING BOARD HAS CREATED EXPECTATION THAT U.S. WILL PRESENT A NEW PROPOSAL. IN ANY CASE WE RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT PROCEED ON THE BASIS OF ITS SUGGESTION REF C WITH A VIEW TO PRESENTATION TO THE GDR IN SEPTEMBER OR SOME OTHER APPROPRIATE TIME. BOLEN

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